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ABSTRACT

This fastback describes the Publishing Center, a center designed to publish student writings, located in the Douglas Grafflin Elementary School in Chappaqua, New York. Following a brief introduction, the first section of the fastback outlines the steps in the process approach to teaching writing. The next section describes how the Publishing Center works by following the development of a story written by a third-grade student. Details on the organizational structure of the Publishing Center and a discussion of the value of a writing center are provided in the remaining chapters. Appendixes consist of: (1) a sample memo to teachers about establishing a Publishing Center; (2) a sample letter to parent and community volunteers; (3) a volunteer information sheet; (4) an outline of equipment and supplies needed; (5) procedures for editors; (6) an editor/typist cover sheet; (7) instructions for typists; (8) instructions for bookmakers; and (9) procedures for working in kindergarten. (MM)

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The Elementary School Publishing Center

Lillian Gobi

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Lillian Gold is a retired elementary school teacher, who currently works part-time as coordinator of the Publishing Center (the subject of this fastback) at the Douglas Grafflin Elementary School in Chappaqua, New York. She began her teaching career in New York City and taught for 30 years at Grafflin and other schools in Westchester County, New York.

For many years she served as a cooperating teacher working with student teachers from the State University of New York at New Paltz, Marymount College, and Pace University. Since retiring she has served as a volunteer at the Little School at Pace University and helped to establish a program for gifted five- and six-year-olds at Park Elementary School in Ossining, New York.

In 1969, while on a year's sabbatical, she traveled extensively in Europe and Asia visiting schools in Denmark, Austria, West Germany, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Japan. In addition to traveling, her professional interests include individualized reading programs, the open classroom concept, eliminating sexism in the curriculum, and parent participation in the classroom.

The Elementary School Publishing Center

by
Lillian Gold

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This fastback is sponsored by the University of Miami Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, which made a generous contribution toward publication costs.

The chapter sponsors this fastback to honor the memory of Dorothy Freeman Lear. In 1941, Dorothy Freeman left her job as an illustrator for *Vogue* in New York City and moved to Florida. She took what was to be a temporary teaching job at the Lear School in Miami Beach, but ended up marrying the school's director, Richard E. Lear, and stayed there for the rest of her life. Together they built one of America's finest private schools. They took turns going back to college. Although few people knew it, Dorothy Lear had at least five master's degrees and was a member of Mensa. She earned her doctorate at the University of Miami at age 65.

In 1959, when her husband was president of the University of Miami Chapter, the Lear School became the site for dozens of chapter meetings, initiations, and family picnics. After her husband's death, Dorothy insisted that the chapter continue to use the facilities. When women were admitted into Phi Delta Kappa in 1974, Dorothy F. Lear was initiated as the chapter's first female member in a special ceremony. A few years later she served as president of the chapter.

Tiny yet regal, friendly yet almost shy, her kindness and humor always made you feel welcome. When you talked with Dorothy Lear, she listened; and her eyes told you that you were the most important person in the world. For a tiny slice of time, you believed it, and you were.

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Introduction

This fastback describes the Publishing Center located in the Douglas Grafflin Elementary School, a K-6 school with approximately 600 children, located in Chappaqua, N.Y., about 30 miles north of New York City. The Publishing Center evolved out of the school's experience in using the process approach to teaching writing, the final stage of which is the publication of children's writing. Grafflin's principal, Dr. Michael Kirsch, calls the Publishing Center an "extension of the celebration of writing."

With the encouragement and support of Dr. Kirsch and Superintendent Dr. John Connolly, I have undertaken to describe the purpose and operation of Grafflin's Publishing Center in the hope that it will serve as a guide to other schools that want to establish a similar center.

Central to the success of the Publishing Center has been the Grafflin PTA. It has made the center one of its program priorities by encouraging parents to volunteer and by providing financial support to purchase supplies and equipment.

Most important has been the enthusiastic support of Grafflin's teachers for the publishing center idea. Through their efforts the children have written and published 2,327 books since 1984. Their greatest reward is watching the children's eyes light up when they see their writing published in a book.

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The Process Approach to Teaching Writing

Many years ago, when our 11-year-old son went away to camp for the summer, his father and I eagerly awaited his first letter. The letter was filled with descriptions of his exciting new experiences, but it had six spelling or grammatical errors. My husband, a teacher at the time, picked up his red pencil, made the needed corrections, and sent the letter back to our son. A week later, we received a postcard from our son with the following terse message: "If you ever mark up my letter agen (sic), I'll never send you anuther (sic) one."

Needless to say, my husband and I learned an important lesson from that experience. Here was a child who wanted to share his excitement with us, and we did appreciate learning about his new experiences. But in our son's mind we, his parents, came across as being more concerned with correct spelling and usage than we were with sharing his ideas or feelings. This experience with our son is repeated in the classroom as well, when teachers become so concerned about grammatical correctness that they frequently neglect the creative expression of ideas and feelings in children's writing.

For too long we have assumed that children do not want to write or do not know what to write about. Some years ago, while participating in a committee to revise the teaching of language arts in New York State, I found that much of our time was devoted to finding ways to motivate children to write. One technique we recommended was to provide interesting and exciting beginning sentences to stimu-

late student writing. For example, "When I woke up this morning, I looked outside and saw a spaceship on the lawn." or "I found an old box in the attic, and when I opened it, I saw. . ."

These story-starter sentences were intended to inspire children to write, and perhaps they did. But why did we insist that each child write about the same thing? Then, when the story was written, out came the red pencil to search for every spelling or grammatical error. Why were we so obsessed with correctness and neglectful of the ideas and feelings expressed?

About 10 years ago, a new approach to teaching writing began to appear in the literature. (See fastback 193 *The Teaching of Writing in Our Schools*, by John M. Kean.) This new approach, supported by a great deal of research, is known as the "process approach to writing." As researchers began to study how children go about writing, they realized that children's writing develops in a series of stages. Therefore, the methods used to teach writing should take these stages into consideration. Many articles and books have been published on the process approach to writing. They all make a lot of sense.

The sequence of the process approach to writing begins with the pre-writing stage. This is the time that the author prepares to write by talking, reading, and thinking about a topic, an idea, or a feeling. It is during this stage that the author starts to organize ideas and develops a general plan for writing.

The second stage involves the actual writing, when thoughts are put down on paper. The essential element in this stage is to keep the focus on content and expressing one's ideas rather than dealing with the mechanics of writing.

Revision is the third stage and usually occurs after a conference with a teacher or a peer. In this stage the author may make changes to clarify ideas, to improve the organization, and to make necessary corrections of spelling and grammar.

The final stage is "sharing" one's writing with others. Since the chief purpose of any writing is to communicate with others, the sharing

Children proudly display their published books while standing in front of a bulletin board on which is kept a record of all the books published at the Publishing Center.

of one's story, poem, or essay with an audience makes this stage perhaps the most fulfilling. The sharing can take many forms: an author's party, a display of children's best stories on a classroom bulletin board, a class magazine, or publishing one's writing in a book – as described in this fastback.

The essential element common to all the research is that children are individuals and should be treated as such. If children are to write, they should be encouraged to write about topics that are significant to them – about real-life situations, not artificial story starters. This gives children the concept that the real purpose of writing is to communicate one's ideas and feelings to others.

Then, after the children have written their stories, the teacher can address their needs in spelling and correct usage and provide instruc-

tion directly related to improving the message to be communicated. In this context, children can see the reason for correcting errors in spelling and grammar. They can see that the writer's meaning is quite different if he says, "my dear frog," instead of, "my dead frog." They can see why quotation marks are needed to show who is doing the talking. They can see why commas are needed to set off a series or to show the relationship of ideas.

The children's own errors can become the focus for mini-lessons for a small group or for the whole class. Research has shown that correct usage taught in the context of the writing process is more effectively learned than by teaching usage in isolation.

We know that children want to write not only to express themselves, but also to share their ideas with others. This calls for an audience. Enter the Publishing Center – a place to put one's writing in a readable form for others to share and enjoy. Here is where the editor's "red pencil" is welcome. Children come to see the friendly copy editors and proofreaders as partners, who help to make sure the reader will understand what they have to say. To understand how the Publishing Center works, let us follow the steps in the process approach using a story written by a third-grader. Let's call her Jessica.

Jessica's Story

The writing and publishing process really begins and ends in the classroom, with the teacher playing a significant role. In this third-grade classroom, writing is scheduled for about 35 minutes, three or sometimes four days a week. The children know by looking at a daily schedule on the chalkboard that it is time for their writing period. Some eager youngsters have already started; others wait for direction from the teacher.

The teacher begins by saying, "I'm also going to write my story for a few minutes, and I prefer not to be disturbed. If you need any help immediately, you know that you may ask a friend. You may write about anything you wish, but remember that you should not hurt anybody by what you say."

When a teacher writes along with the class, even for just a few minutes, it sends the message that adults also write to express themselves. Having the teacher write along with the children has proven to be an effective method for inspiring the children to write. Typical comments from the children are, "Look, our teacher is writing a story, too." "She always reads her story to us. The last one she wrote was a fable and we all liked it." Some teachers at Grafflin have written stories, which were then published by the Publishing Center.

While the teacher is writing, she also is observing what is going on in the class. Some children are writing diligently; some are talking quietly to friends about their stories. A few are looking for ideas

in the "writing corner." (See fastback 127 *Writing Centers in the Elementary School*, by Duane R. Tovey.) Two children are drawing pictures to illustrate their stories. Two just seem to be sitting and thinking (a perfectly legitimate pre-writing activity).

At the end of the five minutes, the teacher is ready to help by "conferencing" with the children. She walks around the room with her notebook, in which she keeps a brief record of the conferences and of each child's special needs. Sitting next to a child or even on the floor, if that is where the child is writing, she talks to each child about his or her story, raises questions, or makes encouraging remarks.

On this particular day, Jessica has completed a story and wants to talk about it. She needs a little more "conferencing." The teacher asks Jessica whether classmates John and Michael may join them, since they also are waiting to "conference" and might have some ideas to offer. Jessica agrees.

Jessica likes to write and has written several stories, especially about trips with her family. Last week the teacher had asked her whether she would like to write about something else. Jessica, her eyes shining, said, "May I write about my dog?"

"Of course," replied the teacher, "But I didn't know you had a dog."

"I don't now, but I used to have one," responded Jessica. She wasted no time in getting started and spent most of the week thinking and writing. Now she has finished her story and wants to talk about it.

Here is her story, which she reads to the teacher:

My Memories of Max

My dog's name is Max. It is a Portugese Water dog. We gave him away to some nice people. They only had Portugese Water dogs. People would come and buy the dogs.

I started crying in the car when we left. But my dad says, It's the best place for him. Now I think it is the best place for him. They do have a very nice home for dogs. My mom even wants Max back, too. We gave Max away because he was messing up the house and it

wasn't fair to Max because my brother and I are in school and my mom is at work, and so is my dad.

It seems so quiet in my house. I miss the times when I went into my backyard and I threw a stick. Max went to fetsh it and he never gave the stick back so I had to chase him all over the yard to get the stick back. And I still have a lot of memories of my dog Max.

During the conference John comments that he likes Jessica's story very much. Michael adds, "I would like to have a dog, and I promised my parents that I would take care of it. But they still wouldn't get one, so I know how Jessica feels." The teacher compliments Jessica for writing a story that is quite unlike the others she has written and adds, "I can appreciate how you feel about Max, but you do realize that it was best for him."

"I like this story and think it's my best," says Jessica. "So I was wondering if I can have this one published." The teacher agrees that it is definitely worth publishing, but then points out that it needs some corrections. Quotation marks are needed for one direct quote, and the teacher explains that she will give a mini-lesson on the use of quotation marks later in the day. She shows Jessica how she can use more paragraphs to break up different parts of the story. She also points out to Jessica two misspelled words, "Portuguese" and "fetch," but acknowledges that her attempts with "invented spelling" are good. With the help of a dictionary, Jessica is able to correct these.

After the conference sessions are completed, the class assembles for a mini-lesson on the use of quotation marks. With Jessica's permission, the teacher uses a sentence from her story as a first example. Then the other children offer their own sentences. Interest is high.

When recess time comes, Jessica is so eager to publish her story that she gives up her play time to discuss it further with the teacher. They agree that after the corrections have been made, the story should be recopied very legibly so the people in the Publishing Center will be able to read it easily. Jessica gets to work immediately. By the next morning Jessica has finished making her corrections and recopy-

ing the story. The teacher checks it, makes a copy of it for her files, and sends Jessica to the Publishing Center to schedule an appointment.

At the time of her appointment, Jessica returns to the center to meet with a parent volunteer editor. Since Jessica has not published a book before, the parent editor discusses with her what they will be doing together. "Your book," she explains, "will have a wallpaper cover which you may select, a title page, a dedication, then your story with or without illustrations, and finally something about yourself."

Jessica and the parent editor read the story together, and Jessica decides that she does want to illustrate it. After deciding how many sentences will go on each page, they agree on an eight-page book. They then discuss the dedication and author's biographical notes. The editor completes the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet (See Form #5). Jessica selects a 6" x 9" book cover from those already preassembled by the bookmakers (also parent volunteers). "This wallpaper cover

This young author is engaged in an editorial conference with a parent editor.

is so pretty. I like the colors and the flowers in the design," says Jessica.

Here is Jessica's corrected and edited story, now ready for typing:

p. 1 (title page)

My Memories of Max
by Jessica Alden

p. 2. (dedication page)
This book is dedicated to my mother and father.

p. 3. [My dog's name is Max. It is a Portuguese Water dog. We gave him away to some nice people. They only had Portuguese Water dogs. People would come and buy the dogs.]

p. 4. [I started crying in the car when we left. But my dad said, "It's the best place for him." Now I think it is the best place for him. They do have a very nice home for dogs.]

p. 5. [My mom even wants Max back, too. We gave Max away because he was messing up the house, and it wasn't fair to Max because my brother and I are in school and my mom is at work, and so is my dad.]

p. 6. [It seems so quiet in my house. I miss the times when I went into my backyard and I threw a stick. Max went to fetch it and he never gave the stick back so I had to chase him all over the yard to get the stick back.]

p. 7. [I still have a lot of memories of my dog Max.]

p. 8. (author's biography)
Jessica Alden is in the third grade at Grafflin Elementary School. She lives with her mother, father, and brother in Chappaqua, New York. She enjoys writing. This is her first published book.

A little hesitantly, Jessica asks, "When do you think my book will be ready?" The parent replies, "After it is typed, proofread, and bound, it will be returned to you, and then you'll be able to illustrate it."

About a week later, the coordinator of the Publishing Center presents the finished book to a delighted Jessica. Her classmates eagerly await sharing time so that they can hear Jessica's story. Jessica illlustrates her book and announces proudly, "Now I have a present for Mother's Day. My mom will be so happy."

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Planning the Publishing Center

The previous chapter told how Jessica went about getting her story published, but it did not provide the details on how the Publishing Center operates. Obviously, the publishing process requires some sort of organizational structure. This is the subject of the rest of this fastback.

Essentially, the Publishing Center is a place where a child comes with a story selected for publication after consultation with the teacher. This occurs usually after a child has written several stories and believes that this one represents his or her best work and is worthy of publication. The teacher's role is to see that the story is corrected for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

After making an appointment to meet with the parent editor, the child comes with the story and confers with the editor about pagination, illustrations, and the format of the book. Another parent volunteer types the story following the editor's specifications; then the bookmaker parent volunteer binds the book, which is then returned to the child.

Preferably, the inspiration for starting a publishing center should come from the teachers, since it is in the classroom that the whole process starts and ends. But it is perfectly feasible for an administrator, parent, or group of parents to set the process in motion. As with any project involving several steps and a variety of personnel, procedures must be developed, schedules established, and overall management set up. In short, *somebody has to be in charge*.

That somebody could be a teacher or administrator assigned the responsibility. Or it could be a qualified parent who has the interest and sufficient time to devote to this project. At Grafflin, that some-

body is the author, a retired Grafflin teacher with a longtime interest in promoting children's writing. Many communities have retired teachers who would find such a part-time job a challenging assignment and a way to continue to use their skills.

Because the success of the Publishing Center requires many hours of volunteer help, the PTA is a logical source for recruiting parent volunteers. In fact, the PTA might be persuaded to take on the Publishing Center as one of its major projects.

Even in these times with so many mothers in the workforce, there are always some – and fathers too – who are willing to give an hour or two each week to help in the Publishing Center. Some working parents can arrange their schedules so that they can participate. One Grafflin father joined us for an hour every Wednesday morning before commuting to his job in New York City. He felt that his work as a parent editor not only helped the center, but inspired his son to write more. Even parents whose work schedules do not permit them to come to school often are willing to assist by working at home, especially with typing.

If the publishing center idea has not been initiated by the teachers themselves, then the first order of business is enlisting their cooperation, because without the teachers encouraging children to write in the classroom, there will be no manuscripts to publish in the center. One approach is to ask a teacher who has had experience in having children make their own books in the classroom to speak to the faculty about the motivational value of publishing children's stories, and how having a central publishing center would allow all children this opportunity. Also, it should be made clear that the establishment of a publishing center will not mean additional work for teachers, since parent volunteers will be used to run the center.

Once the plans for the publishing center are completed, an announcement should be made to the faculty and to parents. Form #1 in the Appendix is a sample memo for notifying teachers; Form #2 is a sample letter that can be sent to parents.

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A Place for the Center

The publishing center should be located in a space that is easily accessible to the children and parent volunteers. Ideally, it should be a room or office that can be used exclusively for the publishing operation. However, it could be set up in a section of the library or media center. It should be large enough for several people to work comfortably, including space where the editor can confer with the student authors.

Furniture, equipment, and supplies needed for the center are available in most schools, so no major financial outlay should be necessary. The PTA might be willing to cover the costs of certain supplies. See Form #3 in the Appendix for a list of essential items for the center.

The publishing center should be an inviting place for both the volunteers who work there and the children who come for their appointments. It can be decorated with attractive displays that carry out the publishing theme. Book posters are available from commercial publishers at no cost. A bulletin board chart can show a record of the number of books published. At Grafflin we made a display showing a large tree with branches. On the branches are various colored leaves made of construction paper on which are printed the names of the children and the titles of the books they have published. The caption for the display is "Watch Our Budding Authors Grow." Other displays might feature book mobiles or book trains.

Training the Volunteers

If parent volunteers are to operate the publishing center, they must receive a general orientation and specific training for the jobs they will be doing. Once the volunteers have been recruited, they should receive an invitation to attend the training workshop.

Three workshop sessions of an hour or so each are usually adequate. The first session can be devoted to an explanation of the process approach to writing and how the parent editors should relate to

the student authors. The second session can be devoted to bookmaking and the final session to typing specifications.

Since many of the volunteers may be unfamiliar with the process approach to writing, it is important in the first session to explain the philosophy of the concept and how it ties in with the work of the publishing center. A teacher who has had experience using the process approach is probably the best person to take this assignment.

The parent editors who work directly with the children should understand that their relationships with children should be friendly but businesslike. They should show respect for the children's writing and treat them much as an editor at a commercial publishing house would do when working with an author. They should understand that the only changes to be made in the children's writing are corrections in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

Specific instructions for parent editors are found in the Appendix (Form #4). A good training activity for volunteers is to simulate an editor/author session, with one parent playing the part of a child author and another the editor. They can go through the whole procedure using the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet (Form #5) for a sample story, figuring out the pagination, and discussing whether there will be illustrations and how many.

In the training sessions for typists and bookmakers, accuracy and neatness should be stressed. Every effort should be made to produce a professional-looking product that shows off the children's writing to its best advantage. This training session also can be used to familiarize the volunteer typists with the typewriters or word processors they will be using. Instructions for typists and bookmakers are found in Forms #6 and #7 in the Appendix.

Illustrating the Books

If, after consulting with the editor, a child decides to illustrate the book, the typist must be instructed to leave adequate space. Generally the books are illustrated in the classroom after they have been

A parent volunteer typist transforms a child's original manuscript into a printed page.

returned to the children. The eager ones get to work immediately. Others may be uneasy about illustrating on what is the finished copy and need some teacher guidance. In such cases the teacher can give the child several pieces of paper the same size as the area on the page for the illustration and have them practice doing several drawings before actually doing a final drawing in the book.

Parent volunteers who have talent in drawing also can assist the reluctant illustrator. At Grafflin, when we sent out the initial questionnaire requesting volunteers for the Publishing Center, we had a category called "Artist in Residence," which could be checked by those who were willing to help children with their illustrations. It has proved to be a successful method for identifying special talents in our parent volunteers.

Kindergartens, Too

When Grafflin's Publishing Center first opened, the kindergarten was not included. But as news of the center spread and kindergartners began hearing about the books their older siblings were bringing home, they wanted to make books, too. Their teachers agreed but realized that the procedures would have to be modified since five-year-olds were not yet able to write their own stories, although some were experimenting with invented spelling to express their ideas.

First the kindergarten teachers bring their classes to the Publishing Center so the children can observe the process of publishing a book. Back in the classroom the children draw their pictures and then dictate a story to a parent editor to go with their drawings, indicating what words are to go on each page. Or the children can dictate their stories first and then draw their pictures. Then the drawings and dictated stories are taken to the Publishing Center, where parent volunteers type the children's exact words onto the papers with their drawings. These are placed in book covers selected by the children; the books are bound and then returned to the children.

At the training session for parent editors, those who are especially interested in working with five-year-olds receive additional training. Specific guidelines for working with kindergartners are given in the Appendix (see Form #8).

It is most rewarding to see the excitement on kindergartners' faces when they receive their books. It tells them that what they have to say is important and worthy of being published. Their books can receive the same recognition as those of their older brothers and sisters, when they bring them home and place them on the bookshelf or coffee table. Even at this early age, they begin to see the importance of writing, an attitude that persists as they progress through school. I have heard third- and fourth-graders refer proudly to the books they wrote in kindergarten. Some have told me; "I shall keep these books forever."

Opening the Publishing Center

After the training sessions have been completed, the publishing center is ready for business. The opening should be announced with some fanfare. The children should receive an announcement, which will serve to remind the teachers that they should be helping their students select some of their best writing to be published. A bright-colored poster in the school hall and announcements in the daily bulletin or over the public address system are other ways of letting children know about the publishing center. An announcement also should be sent to the volunteers with the request that they sign up for the hours they can work. Then a master schedule can be developed and posted at the center.

The opening of the publishing center would make an excellent feature story for the local newspaper. An article featuring the creative work of children along with the involvement of parent volunteers is the kind of story that would have high readership interest. A press release can be sent to the local paper, or a call to the editor might result in a reporter being assigned to cover the story.

During the first few weeks, the coordinator of the publishing center should try to be present during the hours the center is open in order to see that it is running smoothly. When the coordinator is not able to be present, a volunteer should be appointed to supervise the operation. This person should know where all materials are kept, should oversee the work of the editors, typists, and bookmakers, and should be prepared to answer the many questions that inevitably arise.

The Value of a Publishing Center

For children, the value of the publishing center is that it provides an incentive to write. The prospect of having one's story published and shared with others provides a meaningful purpose for writing. In sharing their experiences and feelings, children come to understand that they must write clearly in order to communicate; they must write in an interesting manner in order to hold the reader's attention. They realize that having one's writing published as a book makes it important to use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. There is a reason for mastering these basic skills.

When children come to the center to meet with the parent editor, they have an opportunity to work with another adult, who respects them and their writing and helps them to make decisions about the book format, cover, illustrations, pagination, the dedication, and the author's biographical notes. By being actively involved in the publishing process, the children are introduced to a world beyond the classroom.

For teachers, the publishing center serves as an outlet for their students' best creative writing. It serves as a motivation for many kinds of student writing. And for those using the process approach to teaching writing, it provides the ideal answer for the final stage of the process – sharing through publication.

On a more practical level, having the publishing center staffed by parent volunteers relieves teachers of the time-consuming tasks of try-

ing to publish books in their own classrooms. As one fourth-grade teacher aptly put it, "Thank you for all your amazing efforts this year. The publishing of books is a real incentive to our students."

The Parent Connection

The value of parent involvement in the publishing center cannot be over-emphasized. At Grafflin, a school with approximately 600 students, we have had as many as 70 parents volunteering to help in the center. Even though some drop out during the course of the year to accept jobs or because of other commitments, enough remain and others are recruited so that all the manuscripts children bring to the center are published. During the 1987-88 school year, 661 books were published.

The publishing center allows parents to be meaningfully involved in the school's instructional program. It allows them to use their skills,

Parent volunteers skillfully create the covers that will go on the children's books.

to do more than make cookies for the school bake sale. It gives them one more opportunity to see how the school really functions. They can see that the basics are being taught, albeit in a manner quite different from the way they were taught. Some parents even have written their own books, which the center then publishes and adds to the school library. The publishing center makes a school-parent connection, providing one of the best forms of public relations possible.

Commenting on Grafflin's Publishing Center, one parent volunteer said, "It is a very rewarding experience because the children work so hard and then get that special feeling when they see the finished product." Another parent, a former English teacher, had this to say, "I have seen a definite improvement in the children's writing since we started publishing. This is not only in my own children's writing but in the writing of the children whom I meet with as a volunteer parent editor." One father wrote, "I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the privilege of working with the children. They are delightful, imaginative, and very fortunate to have such a program. I'm grateful indeed for the opportunity to have worked with you and your wonderful staff of volunteers."

Parent volunteers play a key role in our Publishing Center. We recognize and celebrate their contributions at the end of the school term, when the Grafflin PTA sponsors a "Thank You Party" for all the center volunteers. Teachers and administrators also are invited to the party, which has become one of the highlights of the school year.

The Children Speak

How do the children feel about the Publishing Center? Here are some of their responses when asked about the center:

First-Graders

"I was so excited when my book was published."
"I just felt so good."
"I like the publishing center because the people there are so nice."

Second-Graders

"I wonder where my parents will put this book – with the fiction or the non-fiction books."

"My book goes on the coffee table with all the special books."

Third-Graders

"I like the Publishing Center very much, but what I like most about it is writing. I want to become an author when I grow up, so I like writing a lot. I should become an author because I think I have talent. Do you think I do?"

"I like the Publishing Center because I like writing stories. When I'm writing, I feel like I'm the one in the story, instead of the one writing it."

"The books I wrote made me feel like a real author and illustrator."

Fourth-Graders

"I like the feeling I got when my book was given to me. It makes me feel proud to know that I can write something good enough to get published. It's fun to edit the books and pick out the book covers."

"I really enjoy using the Publishing Center. It's a great way for me to express my feelings. Most people don't realize how lucky and fortunate we are to have a publishing center."

"The Publishing Center is a place where us kids can see how authors make their books. . . . It's fun when you look at your book with a cover and it says your title and then it says, 'By Lisa,' or whatever your name might be. The people who work there and help us make pages are so nice and polite. They are patient."

We conclude with a bit of poetry, written by the center's parent coordinator in 1985. It captures the essence of what the Publishing Center is.

A Sonnet from the Publishing Center

How can we thank thee? Let us count the ways.
We thank thee, our editors, for thy patient looks
When our great second-graders came with fifth or sixth books.
Thy fine work is worthy of everyone's praise.

We thank thee, our bookmakers – thou art heaven sent!
Gluing and sewing could drive thee berserk.
Art thou gluttons for week after week of hard work,
Or dost thou like sniffing the rubber cement?

We thank thee, our typists, undaunted though wearied,
For kindergarten stories with much illustration,
For thirteen-page stories with dialogue and punctuation.
The quotation marks should go outside the period!

We thank most of all our leader and Muse,
The lady whom all of us hold very dear.
Whate'er thou dost ask we cannot refuse.
It's because of thee we all are here
Celebrating our success – and if thou choose,
We shall be back to work with you next year.

Edith (Taffy) Leavitt
Parent Coordinator, 1985

Lillian Gold, coordinator of the Publishing Center and author of this fastback, confers with two parent volunteer bookbinders.

Appendix

Form #1. Sample Memo to Teachers

To: All Teachers
From: Coordinator, The Publishing Center
Subject: Establishing a Publishing Center

Several parents have expressed an interest in setting up and operating a Publishing Center in our school. Our principal is very excited about the idea, and we think you will be, too, when you see how the center can contribute to the writing program in our school. If you are using the process approach to teaching writing, the center can serve as a culminating activity by publishing your students' best writing in book form. However, before we proceed, we would like to get your reactions, since your cooperation is essential if this project is to succeed.

Please be assured that the establishment of the Publishing Center will not entail any extra work on your part. Rather, the center will be staffed by a corps of parent volunteers, who will be responsible for taking a child's final draft and turning it into a typed book bound in a permanent cover. The volunteers will carry out all the technical processes involved in publication. Here is the way we envision the Publishing Center will operate.

The children, after consulting with their teachers, will decide what story, poem, or other piece of writing they would like to have published.

The piece of writing selected should represent the child's best effort. It should be reviewed by the teacher, who will note any corrections needed before the child submits it to the Publishing Center. The child then will sign up for a conference on the appointment sheet posted in the center and appear at the designated time. The volunteers will take it from there following these steps:

1. The child will meet with a volunteer parent editor for about 15 minutes. The editor and child first will read the story together.

2. The editor will: a) correct only spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or grammar errors that may have occurred during recopying of the final draft; b) determine with the child what sentences will go on each page and whether there will be illustrations; and c) assist the child with the title, author's autobiography, and dedication.

3. The edited story then will be typed, sewed together, and glued into a prepared wallpaper book cover.

4. The completed, bound book along with the original draft is then returned to the child. The child is free to take the book home, or it can be added to the classroom library collection. Illustrations can be added at this time if the child wishes to do so.

May I please have your reactions to this project and any input you would like to offer within the week. If the response is positive, we need to start contacting volunteers. If you have any questions or concerns, please see me in Room 103.

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Form #2. Sample Letter to Volunteers

Dear Parents and/or Community Volunteers:

We are considering the establishment of a Publishing Center at our school, which will publish our children's best writing in a permanent, bound-book format. We believe that publishing children's writing is an exciting way to encourage our budding young authors to write more and to write better. The prospect of seeing their writing published as a book is a powerful form of motivation for the children.

If our Publishing Center is to succeed, we will need a lot of volunteer help. This is where you come in. No prior experience in publishing is necessary. We will have workshops to train volunteers in each step of the publishing process. We think you will find that working with the children will be a stimulating and rewarding experience.

Specifically, we are looking for volunteers to help with the following:

Editing: Editors work directly with the children, helping them put the final drafts of their stories in the book format.

Typing: Typists take the children's final drafts and type them on pages in the format the children and their editors have specified. Typing may be done at school or at home.

Bookmaking: This job involves preparing the book covers and binding the typed manuscripts in the covers. The school supplies all the necessary materials. This job may be done at school or at home.

Illustrating: Inspiring and guiding those children who wish to illustrate their stories.

Kindergarten editing: Working with kindergarten children, most of whom will need to dictate their stories.

Our plan is have the Publishing Center open four mornings a week from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Mondays through Thursdays for all activities, with Fridays reserved for typists and bookmakers. If you can help us with this exciting project, please fill out the form below and have your child return it to the main office within the week. We will notify

you of the dates of the training workshops and set up a work schedule based on the times you indicate you are available.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

_____

Coordinator of the Publishing Center

- -

Volunteer Information Sheet

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address _____

Child's Name _____ Teacher _____

I volunteer to help with (check as many as you wish):

___ Typing ___ Editing ___ Bookmaking ___ Illustrating

Please circle day and write in the hours that you could be available.

M _____ T _____ W _____ Th _____

F _____ (typists and bookmakers only)

At Home _____
(for typists and bookmakers)

Form #3. Equipment and Supplies Needed

Equipment

The equipment needed for the publishing center is available in most schools. There probably should be desks for two editors with two chairs at each desk for conferencing between the editor and the author. There should be two typing stations with one of the typewriters having primary type. The bookmakers will need a large table or counter for making the covers and binding the books. A set of open shelves is needed for storing supplies and for a set of boxes or baskets to hold manuscripts in various stages of the publishing process. The boxes might be labeled "To Be Proofread Before Typing," "OK To Be Typed," "To Be Proofread After Typing," "Ready To Be Bound," and "Finished Books." While not essential, a paper cutter and pencil sharpener come in handy.

Supplies for Bookmakers

Many of the supplies needed by the bookmakers are available from local vendors, who might donate them or sell them at cost. Otherwise they can be ordered from a school supply company. They include:

1. Wallpaper for book covers. The local wallpaper vendor might donate old sample books or even full rolls of discontinued stock.
2. Newsboard or chipboard (12 x 18 inches). This is available at little or no cost from dry cleaning stores or a print shop. Or it can be purchased from a paper supplier.
3. Rubber cement. It is most economical to purchase this by the gallon. However, at the beginning, purchase about a dozen eight-ounce cans with the brush in the cap. These can be refilled when they are empty.
4. White construction paper (9 x 12 inches).
5. Binding materials. This includes white quilting thread (100% cotton) and chenille (candlewicking) needles, size 18 or 20.
6. Miscellaneous items: a roll of one-inch masking tape, rulers and yardstick, scissors with long blades, and jumbo paper clips.

Supplies for Typists

1. Standard bond typing paper should be purchased by the ream.
2. Typewriter ribbons or cartridges. It is important for the type in the books to be solid black, so replace ribbons before the type becomes too light.
3. Correction fluid or "Ko-Rec Type."
4. Self-adhesive unprinted labels (2 x 4 inches).

Supplies for Editors

1. "Colorbrite" pencils (erasable).
2. Thin felt-tip pens in blue, black, green, red.
3. *Chicago Manual of Style* or other good style handbook.
4. *American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College Edition.

Form #4. Procedures for Editors

1. Please sign your name in the Volunteers' Sign-in Book.

2. Check the appointment schedule for the names and classes of children expected during your time slot. If no appointments are scheduled, check with the supervisor for the day for other assignments.

3. When children come for appointments, welcome them and ask them to write their names in the Students' Sign-in Book. Introduce yourself and ask the child to sit next to you. Explain what you will be doing, step by step.

4. Fill Out Editor/Typist Cover Sheet (see Form #5). In filling out this form you will have to discuss the purpose of the dedication, explaining that most authors have a special person in mind when they publish a book. This could be a family member, a friend, or a teacher. Also, discuss what the child wants to say about himself or herself on the "About the Author" page. Then inquire if the child plans to include any illustrations and where they will go.

5. Ask the child to select a book cover from the pile already preassembled.

6. Ask the child to read the story to you. Follow the text in case any help is needed in reading.

7. Make any necessary corrections. These should be only for spelling and punctuation. The editor should not change the writing unless the child wishes to make a change while reading aloud.

8. Determine the pagination by asking whether there will be any illustrations, and if so, how many. Also ask what text should accompany each illustration. On the child's draft, bracket the sentences or paragraphs to be included on each page and note the page number on the draft. If the child does not wish to have any illustrations, divide the text at paragraph breaks so that each page has about the same amount of text.

9. Before the child leaves, review the decisions that you and the child have made so the instructions will be clear to the typist.

10. Enter any special notes that will be helpful to the typist. For example, you might want to indicate that the typing will be continuous. Or the child may have specific instructions such as, "Leave page five empty. I want to put my picture there." or "Leave six lines between paragraphs two and three on page six."

11. The last step of the editorial conference is to clip the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet to the child's draft, enclose it in the book cover, and place it in the "To Be Proofread Before Typing" box. The proofreading is done by the supervisor for the day.

For books of poetry, the editor has additional matters to discuss with the child. You might want to suggest using one of the smaller book covers rather than the standard size. Since there are usually several poems, the child may want a separate page for each one. And because poetry is such a personal form of expression and lends itself to several formats and unorthodox punctuation, the child's requests regarding format and punctuation should be observed. Some children like to start each line with a capital letter; others prefer to use lower case after the first line. Some take great delight in using exclamation marks. Whatever format the child decides to use, make sure the typist gets clear and precise instructions.

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Form #5. Editor/Typist Cover Sheet

_____ Date of editing Typewriter to use:
_____ OK to be Typed Primary _____
_____ OK to be Bound Regular _____

Student Author _____
Grade/Teacher _____
Book Title _____
Book Cover Selected _____
To Be Illustrated: Yes ___ No ___ Number of Pages _____
Dedication: _____
_____
_____

About the Author: _____
_____
_____

Special Notes for Typist: _____
_____
_____

Editor's Name/Telephone _____
Typist's Name/Telephone _____
Date of Typing _____ Typewriter Used _____

Form #6. Instructions for Typists

1. Select a draft from the box marked "OK To Be Typed." Make sure that the drafts have been checked and initialed by a supervisor in the upper left-hand corner of the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet.

2. Read through the draft. All spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors should have been corrected by the editor. Do not make any changes without consulting the supervisor.

3. To prepare the paper for typing, first determine how many sheets you will need. (Each 8½-by-11-inch sheet of standard typing paper makes two pages when folded. In the finished book the typing appears on only the right side of the folded sheet.) The title page and "About the Author" page will take one sheet. In addition, you will need one sheet for each two pages of text. The number of text pages (including illustrations if desired) should have been entered on the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet. If not, you can determine the number of sheets by referring to original draft which shows the page indications. If the number of story pages is odd, then the extra page can be used for the dedication in the front of the book. If the number of story pages is even and a dedication is needed, then another sheet will be needed and there will be a blank page, which can, of course, be used for an illustration if desired.

4. When the number of sheets has been determined, nest the sheets and fold them with the fold on the left. You will then have a folio with a page size that is 5½ by 8½ inches. You will be typing on folded sheets with all the typed material appearing on right-hand pages only. Detailed instructions follow:

The title page is typed on the outside of the first folded sheet. The book title should be centered about three inches from the top of the page with the author's name centered below it. About one inch from the bottom, the author's grade level, teacher, and the date of publication can be typed. Using the same sheet, the "About the Author" (the last page of the book) will be typed on the inside right half of the title page.

On the front of the second folded sheet, the dedication is typed in the format specified by the editor on the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet. The other page of this sheet (the next-to-last page in the book) will carry the last of the story text, or it could have an illustration or could be blank.

5. Having determined the total number of pages needed for the text, you may now proceed with typing the story. Remember that each page should contain only the amount of text indicated by the editor on the draft, that new chapters should always begin at the top of a new page, and that space on some pages, or sometimes whole pages, must be left vacant for illustrations, if so indicated by the author and editor.

You will have to pay careful attention when typing each page of the story to keep the page sequence in order. For example, if the story has six pages, pages 1 and 6 will appear on opposite sides of the same folded sheet. Thus you type page 1 on the front outside of a fresh folded sheet. Then you take the folded sheet out of the typewriter, turn it inside out, and type page 6 of the story. Following this procedure, pages 2 and 5 will be on opposite sides of the same sheet, as will pages 3 and 4.

6. In setting up each page, leave a one-inch margin on top and bottom and on both sides. Center the page numbers two spaces from the top of the page. Start the text four spaces below the page number. And double-space the text unless otherwise indicated.

7. Proofread carefully before removing the sheet from the typewriter; it is easier to make corrections. If a major error has been made, such as leaving out a phrase or sentence, it is probably best to retype the page.

8. The last thing to type is the title and author on the self-adhesive label, which the bookmaker will put on the book cover. Type the title in all caps and the author's name below it in upper and lower case.

9. When the typing is completed, clip the folded pages together in the correct order for binding and enclose them in the book cover along with the label. To avoid clip marks, please use a small piece of scrap

paper under the clip. Place this together with the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet in the "To Be Proofread After Typing" box. Sign your name and date the cover sheet.

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Form #7 Instructions for Bookmakers

1. Books are published in two sizes. The larger size is used for most of the books, with the smaller size usually reserved for books of poetry.

2. Supplies needed include: cardboard, wallpaper, rubber cement, masking tape, quilting thread, and chenille needle.

3. To make the cover, begin by cutting two pieces of cardboard to 6¼" x 9½" (for smaller books 6¼" x 4¾"). Using 1" masking tape, tape the two pieces of cardboard together along the 9½" (or 4¾") side, leaving ½-inch space in the center as a spine.

4. Next, cut one 15" x 12" (or 15" x 6") piece of wallpaper to cover the cardboard.

5. Open the taped cardboard and apply one large X of rubber cement on each side of the tape. Center the cardboard on the wallpaper, with equal amounts of overhang on top, bottom, and sides. Apply rubber cement to the overhang areas. Now comes the tricky part. Fold the corners of the wallpaper first. Then fold the overhang at the top, bottom, and sides and glue it to the cardboard. Now you have a finished cover.

6. Select a typed story, making sure it has been checked "OK to be Bound" in the upper left-hand corner. Fold one piece of white construction paper, 9" x 12" (or 4½" x 12"). Place the typed story inside the construction paper.

7. Open the book flat. Using a ruler, first mark the midpoint on the fold; then mark a point 1" (¾" for smaller books) from the top and bottom of the inner paper, and then mark a point halfway between midpoint and the top and bottom points. Using a heavy needle, poke holes through all the pages at the marks.

8. Thread a needle with a doubled strand of quilting thread to make it about 20" long. Do not knot the thread. Turn over the book (now enclosed in the construction paper) and insert the needle and thread in the midpoint hole and then weave the thread back and forth through the other holes. Keep the thread taut, leaving no slack. Tie the ends of the thread making a hard knot.

9. Open the book cover. Glue the construction paper to the inside front and back cover. The piece of construction paper now serves as end sheets for the cover. When placing the book inside the cover, place it about 1/8 inch to the right of the binding. This helps to avoid buckling. Smooth the pages carefully before closing the cover. It helps to place a heavy book or other object on the book cover for a few hours to keep it flat.

10. Place the typed label on the front cover, a little above the center.

11. The bound and "published" book is now ready to return to the child.

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Form #8. Procedures for Working in Kindergarten

1. When working with kindergartners, it is preferable that the parent editor go to their classroom rather than having the children come to the Publishing Center. Children this age will feel more comfortable and secure working in a familiar setting. However, the teacher might want to arrange a class visit to the center so all the children can see the publishing process in operation. Such a visit can inspire the children to work on a book.

2. When a kindergartner decides to publish a book, the teacher requests that the editor come to the classroom. The editor meets with the child in a section of the classroom where they can work together without distraction. The editor, after getting acquainted with the child, explains how they will work together to create a "published" book and shows the child a few samples of books that other children have published.

3. The editor will bring the following materials to the kindergarten:

- a choice of three covers per child
- several sheets of typing paper, each one folded in half
- a ruler and pencil
- an Editor/Typist Cover Sheet
- a few samples of children's completed books
- crayons or colored pencils for drawing the pictures

4. Fold the two sheets of paper in half to make the book's pages and number the pages lightly in pencil (to be erased later). Explain to the child that he or she can draw a picture on the top or bottom half of the page and that the words of the story will appear on the other half. Or the child can draw a larger picture on a full left-hand page with the text centered on the right-hand page.

5. Encourage the child to talk about the story he or she would like to tell to go with the drawings. Write down the exact words the child gives you on the Editor/Typist Cover Sheet and indicate what words, phrases, or sentences are to go on pages 1, 2, and so on.

6. Fill in the remainder of the Cover Sheet with the necessary information about title, author, grade, and teacher.

7. Explain the purpose of the dedication page and ask the child for the personal information that will appear on the "About the Author" page. Write the exact wording the child gives you for these two pages on the Cover Sheet.

8. Let the child select a book cover and explain that you will now take the cover, the drawings, and the story the child has dictated to the Publishing Center where it will be typed, bound, and then returned as a "published" book.

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